

S O M E  
A C C O U N T

O F T H E L A T E  
M I S S I O N A R I E S

T O T H E  
W E S T I N D I E S,

I N  
T W O L E T T E R S

F R O M T H E  
Rev. Dr. C O K E,

T O T H E  
Rev. J. W E S L E Y.

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B R I S T O L :

P R I N T E D B Y B U L G I N A N D R O S S E R,

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M,DCC,LXXXIX.





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S O M E  
ACCOUNT, &c.

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L E T T E R I.

Barbadoes Dec. 9, 1788.

Hon and most dear Sir,

**I** Have the pleasure of informing you of our safe arrival in this Island, after a voyage of five weeks and four days.

Our voyage, all things considered, was perhaps as pleasant a one as ever was failed. In the turbulent Bay of Biscay, my Brethren were very sick. From Cape Finisterre to this Island, the wind was favourable all the way.

And here I must not omit to bear the most unfeigned testimony of gratitude in behalf of the Captain of our ship. Our accommodations in every respect were very excellent: and he left nothing unprovided, which he thought might be necessary, or in any wise commodious

for us; and his whole treatment of us from the beginning to the end was affectionate and generous to the last degree.

Captain *Sundius* being a man who sincerely fears God, we had full liberty to sing and pray as often as we pleased, and he never neglected to join us. In all my voyages till this, I do not recollect that we were serviceable to any sailor except one; but the first time I preached in the *Hankey*, (on those words of our Lord, *Verily verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;*) the whole crew seemed deeply affected, and the labours of my Brethren, and our public prayers, deepened the impressions they had received. They were eager to receive any books we offered to give them. Instead of the loose songs they sung among themselves at the beginning of the voyage, they delighted in meeting together to read our books. When we parted, the tears trickled down many of their cheeks: they shewed the greatest earnestness to squeeze us by the hand: and when our boat dropped astern, they gave us three as hearty cheers (which is one of their ways of expressing affection) as, I believe, ever were given by a company of sailors.

On Thursday the 4th of December we landed at Bridge-Town, in Barbadoes. As we knew no one, and the expences in the country at the inns are enormous, I embraced this opportunity of sending Messrs. *Lumb* and *Gamble* to our friends on the Island of St. Vincent, by a merchant-ship which sailed that very evening. As Mr. *Pearce* (who remained with me) informed me that a company of soldiers, who resided sometime ago at Kinsale, in Ireland,  
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and among whom there were several pious persons, were now, he believed, in Barbadoes, I desired him to go in search of them. In two hours he brought back with him one of the soldiers; and soon afterwards we were joined by a serjeant, who on seeing Mr. *Pearce*, and recollecting him, seized him in his arms, in the most kind and affectionate manner.

Our friends the soldiers soon informed us, that the love of Christ had constrained them to bear a public testimony for God; and that a Mr. *Button*, a merchant of the town had provided for them a large room which he formerly used as a warehouse, in which they exhorted. We immediately determined to make a visit to this kind merchant the next morning: but he prevented us by an invitation to breakfast with him, being previously informed by the soldiers of our arrival.

To my great surprize I found that Mr. *Button* knew me well; and though I had no personal acquaintance with him, he had frequently heard me preach at Baltimore, in Maryland, where he sometime ago resided. Four of his black servants had been baptized by me at that time, and one of them (a woman) is truly alive to God. His Lady is a native of this Island. His house, his heart, his *all* seemed to be at our service. We discharged our bill at the inn, and found an asylum indeed with this our benevolent friend. After breakfast Mr. *Pearce* and I paid our respects to the Governor of the Island, who received us with great politeness. In the evening I preached in Mr. *Button's* house to about three hundred persons, about twice as many being obliged to go away for want of room. The next evening I had as large a congregation as on the former. Many



heard with deep attention, whilst I endeavoured to shew them how the Comforter convinces of sin, righteousness and judgment. That morning I rode into the country to visit a Gentleman, (*Henry Trotman Esq;*) for whom my kind friend Mr. *Dornford* of London, had procured for me a letter of recommendation, in order to open a way for Mr. *Pearce* into the country; but very providentially there were two Gentlemen of the same christian and surname in the island, and I was led to the house of the Gentleman of that name, for whom my letter was not intended. He received me with the utmost politeness, and after I had breakfasted and dined with him, and laid before him our plan of Operations, he informed me that his house should be always open to my friend Mr. *Pearce*, and his slaves at his command at all proper hours. He has about two hundred.

On Sunday morning, after Mr. *Pearce* had preached at seven o'clock, we breakfasted according to invitation with the Curate of the parish, who received us with great civility. After dinner I received a letter from the Master of a Free-School offering me his great school-room for my evening's duty; where I had a very large and attentive congregation, many of the principal gentry of the town attending. In the evening Mr. *Errington*, one of the Magistrates and Post-Master-General of the Island, made us a visit and supped with us. Between thirty and forty years ago he had frequently heard you and your brother preach in our Chapel in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He expressed the greatest satisfaction and approbation of our design warmly. invited Mr. *Pearce* to visit him frequently, and told us he should  
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be happy on all occasions to yield us any service in his power.

On Monday morning I visited the Mr. *Trotman* whom I had in vain sought for on Saturday. He is a plain country Gentleman, has about two hundred and fifty Negroes on his plantations, and after dinner informed me that he would himself take the first opportunity of waiting on Mr. *Pearce*, and should be happy in having any of his Slaves instructed by him.

Having thus finished the business which lay before me in this Island, I took a place in a vessel bound for St. Vincent's, and expecting to sail in the evening, desired Mr. *Pearce* to preach: as the violent heat to which preaching throws us in this climate, would have rendered it very hazardous to have gone on the water: and I had the pleasure to find that he gave universal satisfaction to a large congregation.

At Mr. *Button's* there were three Ladies on a visit who have a plantation and many Negroes, who have, I trust, in some degree received Divine impressions by our means. Their house will be opened to Mr. *Pearce* whenever he pleases: and our soldiers have engaged to hold prayer-meetings in different parts of the town three or four times a week.

Thus by a series of remarkable providences a wide door seems to be opened for us in Barbadoes. This Island is most favourably circumstanced for the increase of the work of God. It is twenty-two miles long, and fifteen broad. It is said to contain about 70,000 Blacks, and from 25 to 30,000 Whites. The Island is also in general divided into very small farms or plantations, so that even among the Whites,  
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there are thousands whose incomes are very small, and many who are very poor, and who cannot therefore indulge themselves with all the extremes of sensuality, in the manner too many do in this luxuriant country.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient, and

Affectionate Son,

THOMAS COKE.

## L E T T E R II.

Dominica, Dec. 19, 1788.

Hon. and dear Sir,

ON the 11th inst. I landed at St. Vincent's, and in a few hours after set off with Mr. *Baxter* for the Caribb country, preaching in the evening to a lovely company of Negroes in a little town called Caliaqua. The next day we were joined by Messrs. *Gamble* and *Clark*, and reached the house of our hospitable friend, Dr. *Davidson*: who set off with us in the morning to visit the Caribbs. The roads, or rather narrow paths over the mountains which form the boundaries between the English and them, are the worst and the most tremendous I ever rode. Sometime since, Mr. *Baxter* had near lost his life in crossing them. His horse fell down a precipice of thirty feet perpendicular, and the hind legs of the horse were over the precipice



precipice before he was alarmed, when he immediately threw himself off. In one place we could not even lead our horses, till a company of Caribbs who were passing by, lent us their cutlasses, with which we at last cut open a way. When we had descended the great mountain, we came into one of the most beautiful plains I ever saw in my life. It is but seven miles long, and three broad, but I think it is as beautiful as uncultivated Nature can make it. It forms a bow, the string of which is washed by the Atlantic ocean, and the bow itself surrounded by lofty mountains. Here the Caribbs chiefly dwell. As we passed by their villages, they stood at their doors in ranks, crying out, "*Bou jou, Bou jou*:" (a corruption of *Bon Jour*, a good day;) others cried out, "*How dee, How dee*:" and on many of them being asked, they delivered their cutlasses into our hands, which is the highest proof of confidence they can give. We had with us at this time one of the sons of the grand Chief of the Caribbs (*Chateaway*) He has been under the tuition of Mr. and Mrs. *Baxter* for some time, and speaks a good deal of English. His name is *John Dimmey*, a fine young man, and of a princely carriage. His father the grand Chief was gone from home; if I could have seen the father I believe I should have obtained his consent to take his son with me to England. His sentiments are highly refined for a savage. "Teach me your language *Dimmey*," said Mr. *Baxter* to him one day, "And I will give you my watch." "I will teach you my language," replied the young Chief, "But I will not have your watch."

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When we entered into the house of one of the Chiefs whose name is *De Valley*, Mr. *Dimmey* whispered to Mr. *Baxter* that the family would not be satisfied, if we did not take some refreshment, to which we consented : and they soon brought a large dishful of eggs, and a bowl of punch. Mr. *Dimmey* alone could be with difficulty persuaded to sit down with us at table, the rest would serve. A little son of the Chief also, (a very beautiful boy for his colour, who had been under the instruction of Mr. *Baxter*, and had been already taught to spell) gave us high entertainment by the convincing proof he gave us of an infant genius.

But in the midst of all this kindness there was some degree of jealousy : for I perceived that Mr. *Baxter* several times informed them that I received no pay from the King. Mr. *Baxter* seemed to live in their affections ; and as he has already made a considerable progress in their language, I could not help intreating him to spend two years among them, and give them a full trial. Great as the cross was to that good man who expected to return to his beloved Antigua. he immediately consented. On our return from the Caribb country, I visited our new School-House, and found it much larger than I expected, and far too large for one family. I therefore ordered the workmen to divide it: one half of which I appropriated to the use of Mr. and Mrs. *Baxter*, and the other half to that of Mr. and Mrs. *Joyce*. As Mrs. *Baxter* intends to educate some of the Caribb girls, we shall now have three teachers among them. The conduct of Mrs. *Baxter* in this instance is not to be overlooked. Though born of a considerable family in Antigua, and brought

brought up in all the softness and luxury of the country, she readily consented some years ago, that her husband should sacrifice a place of four hundred a year currency which he held under Government, that he might devote his whole time and strength to the work of God: and now was perfectly willing to go with her husband among savages, and spend her time in forming their totally uncultivated minds.

I was very uneasy when I found that little had yet been done by Mr. *Joyce* in the education of the Children: but when all the difficulties were laid open, in the proper settlement of the land on which the house was built, in bringing the materials for building to the proper spot, the illness of Mrs. *Joyce*, and some other particulars, my mind was appeased, and I trust every thing will soon have the most favourable appearance through the blessing of God.

I feel myself much attached to these poor savages. The sweet simplicity and cheerfulness they manifested on every side, soon wore off every unfavourable impression my mind had imbibed from the accounts I had received of their cruelties. Cruelties originating probably with ourselves rather than with them. They are a handsomer people than the Negroes, but have undoubtedly a warlike appearance, as their very women frequently carry cutlasses in their hands, and always knives by their naked sides.

We now returned to Kingston, preaching by the way, and being received by the planters with every mark of kindness and respect. Indeed the whole body of the people seems to wish us success, Many were the proofs of affection shewn us at our departure, especially by

by one whose delicacy will not admit of my mentioning his name.

Having appointed Messrs. *Gamble* and *Clark* to labour in the English division of the Island (Mr. *Baxter* now and then making them a visit I hired a vessel for *Dominica*; and with Mr. and Mrs. *Baxter* (who were desirous of making one visit to their old friends in *Antigua* before they settled among the Caribbs) and Mr. *Lumb*, set sail on Tuesday the 16th for *Dominica*.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most dutiful,

Most affectionate, and

Most obliged Son,

THOMAS COKE.



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